

Workers' Memorial Day — April 28, 2018

Workers' Memorial Day, observed annually on April 28,* recognizes workers who were injured, became ill, or died because of exposures to hazards at work. In 2016, work-related injuries claimed the lives of 5,190 U.S. workers, and the fatal injury rate (3.6 per 100 full time equivalent workers)[†] rose for the third consecutive year, to the highest rate since 2010. Although deaths resulting from work-related injuries are captured through surveillance, most deaths resulting from work-related illness are not. In 2007, an estimated 53,445 persons died from work-related illness (1). In 2016, employers reported approximately 2.9 million nonfatal work-related injuries and illnesses to private industry workers.[§]

Occupational injuries and illnesses also have economic costs. The societal cost of work-related fatalities, injuries, and illnesses was estimated at \$250 billion in 2007, based on methods that focus on medical costs and productivity losses (1).

New data on fatal falls overboard in the fishing industry, one of the nation's most hazardous industries, are reported in this issue of *MMWR* (2). Since 1991, the CDC-NIOSH Western States Division has studied fishing safety and developed interventions to reduce the incidence of injuries and fatalities among the nation's fishermen. More information about commercial fishing safety can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/fishing/>.

* Established in 1970 by the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations.

[†] <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cfoi.pdf>.

[§] <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/osh.pdf>.

References

1. Leigh JP. Economic burden of occupational injury and illness in the United States. *Milbank Q* 2011;89:728–72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0009.2011.00648.x>
2. Case SL, Lincoln JM, Lucas DL. Fatal falls overboard in commercial fishing—United States, 2006–2016. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2018;67:465–9.

Fatal Falls Overboard in Commercial Fishing — United States, 2000–2016

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Commercial fishing is one of the most dangerous jobs in the United States, with a 2016 work-related fatality rate (86.0 deaths per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers) 23 times higher than that for all U.S. workers (3.6) (1). Sinking vessels cause the most fatalities in the industry; however, falling from a fishing vessel is a serious hazard responsible for the second highest number of commercial fishing-associated fatalities (2,3). CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) analyzed data on unintentional fatal falls overboard in the U.S. commercial fishing industry to identify gaps in the use of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention strategies. During 2000–2016, a total of 204 commercial fishermen died after unintentionally falling overboard. The majority of falls (121; 59.3%) were not witnessed, and 108 (89.3%) of these victims were not found. Among 83 witnessed falls overboard, 56 rescue attempts were made; 22 victims were recovered but were not successfully resuscitated. The circumstances, rescue attempts, and limited use of lifesaving

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